Channel: Hidden Rabbits

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Title: The Milo Winter Age of Scorpius BookTok Calamity-Girlfriend Explains

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Transcript

0:00
Hi, I'm Lindsay. And I'm Connor. And this is my girlfriend explains very complicated pop culture things to me.
0:07
The show. I'm the girlfriend. And the person I'm explaining to things are is Connor.
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I am uh historically very unaware of pop culture things. That's why we started
0:19
doing this. So, how are you doing, Connor? I'm good. I'm feeling good. I'm I'm ready to learn about whatever pop culture thing I've been missing out on.
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I'm very excited to tell you everything. I'm back from Vermont, by the You're This is the first thing. Uh we're back from You're back from Vermont. First
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episode back. I was in Vermont for about 3 weeks on a writer's residency and I bought this t-shirt at the gas station. I became
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friends with the people there because they have sugarfree yerba mate and protein bars and that is what I lived on
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out there in the woods. I know. It's uh it's tough being a diabetic and traveling. You can't eat anything anything that
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sounds good but don't think about it anymore. Yeah. Okay. So, Lindsay, what is the thing you're going to be explaining to me?
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What is the thing I don't know about that you're that by the end of the episode I will know a lot about? Do you have any clue where we're going
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today? No. You you are historically very good at not giving away hints. I am a little surprised that you haven't
age of audra.
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heard of this because Connor is an avid fantasy reader. I am. Yeah. An avid reader period. Connor reads an
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awful lot. That's what you said that this this week is going to be about fantasy. I'm like okay that doesn't really narrow it down.
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There's a lot of stuff going on in fantasy. Everybody knows what I'm talking about except for Connor. I don't. And I read fantasy. All right.
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Today we're delving into the world, the wild, fantastical world of Audra Winter.
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Audra Winter? Yeah. I've never Is that name ringing any bells? Is this a person? Yes. That is her pen name. That is not
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her legal name. Okay. But that is what she likes to be known as on the internet. Gotcha. A lot of fantasy authors use pen
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names. That's very common in fantasy. They drew and do. And the last name, Winter, is a great fantasy name. I think it is. Yeah, it is.
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So, January 2021, what were you doing in January 2021? in 2021. Um, this would
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have been post pandemic. Uh, I would have just gotten back to Los Angeles. I would spending spending a
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long time back home. Um, so I would have been still at my apartment um and not
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working. Yeah, I was uh probably still trapped at home trying to find work and couldn't find
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work. I was working at a nursing home in Buffalo, New York. So, I think I was one of the first people in the world to get
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the COVID vaccine. That's right. You were an essential worker. Yeah, we had to get the vaccine to continue to work too. It was like
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non-negotiable. So, we were lined up and we would get our shots and that was my life at that time.
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Um, Audra Winter was posting on TikTok in January of 2021. Okay.
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She starts posting pretty frequently about this book called The Age of Scorpius. Now, according to her, this is
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an idea that had been ruminating in her mind since she was 12 years old. Okay? And it's this fantasy world that is

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built around the zodiac system. Oh god. Okay. Well, it's so original.
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We've never had one of those before. You cannot get annoyed right now. There's so much more to talk about. I
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mean, but it's built around the zodiac. And according to when you're born, there are certain rules that you have to
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follow. So, the one that I keep remembering is that Aries can show no fear. They can show other emotions, but
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they cannot be afraid of anything. And then scorpios cannot show any emotion at
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all. There's a lot of emotive laws to this world. It's kind of like what's that book? Uh
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divergent where they split the the nation into four factions and each faction had its own thing it own.
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I think she went through a pretty heavy divergent and hunger games phase as a kid. And so she created this whole
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fantastical world which is like pretty standard I would say especially for weird awkward kids which I definitely
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was. I had a lot of like imaginary worlds and series of like rules that I abided by. But according to her she
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wanted to turn it into like a fantasy series and she was just getting started doing that and a lot of her early videos
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showed like binders full of world building and of her like sitting at her
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desk just like scribbling out like page after page after page like super prolific. a lot of writing, a lot of
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world building, and then like the art started coming in and she was promoting that and it got really popular because
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book talk, we've talked about this a little bit on this channel before, but book talk and romantic have really
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blossomed in the last couple of years. They become very popular. Well, and especially coming off of the pandemic. So 2021,
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we're still kind of feeling the effects of being locked down and Tik Tok was a way for a lot of people, a a lot of
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careers blew up on Tik Tok because of the pandemic because you couldn't go anywhere. Yeah. I can think of a couple different
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writers, artists, creators who their career started via Tik Tok because of
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lockdown. Yes. A lot of people started their content creation journey during lockdown
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because there was nothing else to do. And fantasy became especially popular during that time because it's escape.
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Yeah. You're all stuck in your apartment and there's nothing else to do and you're sick of looking at your roommate and smelling your trash that needs to go
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out. It's like Yeah. It's a great way to escape your current world. Yeah. So, she became pretty popular and like
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by the end of that year she had about 100,000 followers which is very impressive. Yeah. So, she had 100,000 followers on Tik Tok
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just from like putting out art and maps and like she started posting things
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art like astrology and zodiac male and female friendships that in fact do not turn into relationships when healers and
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literally anything to do with healing trope. But the book had not been released yet and she hadn't even shared excerpts from
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the book. So, it's a little unclear like how this fan art could have been created if nobody knows anything about the
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story. It's more likely that she commissioned artists to create art, right? Which is a good way to market your
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story. Exactly. And in doing so, kind of creating a false narrative of hype and
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interest. Yes. To potentially, I'm assuming to drive sales when the book is eventually released.
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That is exactly what she did. I know the grift, I think. Yeah. So, year later, January
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2022, Audrey signs with a literary agent. Okay. Which is very exciting. And then she disappears until 2024.
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Oh, wow. Two years. Yeah. She doesn't post at all during this time except for one video about
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getting a tattoo. Okay. That has like nothing to do with her previous content. So, like for two years, she's just like out presumably
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living her life, like not posting on TikTok, working with this literary agent. I mean, she kind of left like a 100,000 subscribers just like hanging
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like, "Oh, what whatever happened to that book we were gonna buy, right?" I don't know. So,
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she comes back in 2024 and says that she is going to self-publish and starts a
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Kickstarter to help her do that. Oh. Um, she also mentions at this time that she was dropped by her literary agent,
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but she doesn't give any details as to how or why that happened. Interesting. Well, and what's interesting about that timing to me is
brandon sanderson.
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that uh it was right after the pandemic, Brandon Sanderson did his Kickstarter.
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He and he had a record-breaking Kickstarter, like something like 40 or 50 million raised for the books that he
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had written over the pandemic. And so, I wonder if that might have been an influence on the her decision there.
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I'm sure it might be. Actually, this is something I didn't think about, but when I was putting this story together, but you have read a lot of Brandon Sanderson
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and are like familiar with the sort of lore behind Brandon Sanderson. So, I'm actually curious like how much
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inspiration she took from Brandon Sanderson because I'm not familiar. I don't read fantasy. I probably should have said this at the beginning. I don't
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read fantasy. I have read Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit and that's enough for me. Like, I'm not even interested.
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If Hosir wrote a fantasy novel, I wouldn't read it. I would buy it and it would sit on my shelf and I would never
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read it. That's really saying something too. I'm tell and I would I would give that man a kidney, but I would not read his fantasy novel. It's just not my thing.
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Yeah. I uh meanwhile I've read almost exclusively fantasy. Every fantasy novel you can name. Connor
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has read. There are some other Daniel Green's probably read more fantasy than I have. Barely. That man is coming for the
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crown. But yes, Brandon Sanderson has made up a good portion of my um my reading habits
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over the last like three years, I would say. and he is truly one of the most
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prolific like fantasy authors that we have in the space who has also achieved incredible mainstream success because
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there are some writers who are incredibly prolific. They just don't achieve that kind of mainstream success, right? Uh Adrien Chakovski is one that
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comes to mind. He's a sci-fi writer mostly. Puts out like a book and a half a year. Incredible, wonderful world building,
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but people don't really read him yet. He's not as popular, I would say, as Brandon Sanderson, which is interesting because to watch
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Brandon Sanderson and like the way his career has gone, he has really kind of
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thrown his weight around in a good way for writers on the inside, right? Like he stands up against Audible and Amazon
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when they're trying to make deals that are very like anti- small writer, you know, predatory. Predatory. Yeah. And the whole thing
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with like his uh Kickstarter. So over the course of the pandemic, he wrote
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four or five novels in secret without telling his publisher or his agent. And
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then at the end of the pandemic, he's like, "By the way, I've got all these secret projects. We're doing a Kickstarter and I will be releasing them
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over the course of a single year. Raised I want to say 20 or $30 million in the
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first 48 hours." Dude, like it's it's that phenomenon of like
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someone doing something for a long time and then suddenly major success for a thing and people and
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I'm just like I didn't realize how big this was for some people cuz I read Brandon Sanderson. I didn't know $40
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million worth of people read Brandon Sanderson, you know, and this is going to come up a little later, I think, but it is extremely
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unusual for a writer to make all of their money on writing. Correct. All of the writers that I love and that I look
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to for inspiration when I'm stuck on something, they all teach. Yes. They're all professors usually at like
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Northeastern universities and that is their full-time job and that's how they have medical insurance and like pay for
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the juice in their fridge, right? And they write and publish books when they can. Like that's they kind of
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preserve that as their like side job or side hustle hobby because when you're
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entirely reliant on writing to pay your bills, it can really zap the magic. It's very unusual to hear about Brandon
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Sanderson's and Stephen Kings who only write novels for their job. Super unusual.
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Which Brandon Sanderson does teach as well. He has a professorship at BYU at the same time. So it's like he is one of
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the most successful fantasy writers of the current era and he's a professor and he I think he runs some charitable
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organizations. Like he is not just a writer. Like he's he's running a full-on company. Like
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he has a whole business. He does have a whole business. It's a Yeah. It's kind of like Disney, but you're right universe.
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Yeah, it's it's important as a writer to diversify because you really can't make a living as a writer.
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No. And Brandon Sanderson is smart enough, I assume, to understand that it could all disappear tomorrow. Somebody
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could just find out something about Brandon Sanderson like, "Oh, we don't want to support him anymore." Well,
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and now you're not buying his books. He needs another gig because he's still married and like has a life that he
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needs to support. Exactly. Well, and the thing I think it is important to note like Brandon Sanderson is Mormon. He is openly
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Mormon. He talks about it and there's a lot of people, us included, that don't really agree with Mormon ideology, no or
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the way the Mormon church works. And that's a topic of conversation that floats around him a lot, you know, and
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that's not something he's going to change about himself. And the thing is like you can't extract someone's religion from their writing.
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Of course not. You can't just be like, I'm a Catholic and I'm a writer, but I'm not a Catholic writer. It's like, no, you are. Right?
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That is so religion is so ingrained in how you see and view and experience the world that it comes through in the way
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that you write. In the same way that I'm an atheist, you can feel it in my scripts. Yeah.
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You know that this person does not believe in God. Right. Well, and I think the same is probably true for people who were
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religious and then left. Right. But fantasy has a history of this too, right? Um Elron Hubard is I think a good
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example where he created Scientology through science fiction writing, right? It's there like
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it it's it can't help but affect how the writers work because that's what they believe in terms of like the
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spirituality of the of the universe. You know, it is also being a Mormon author or
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honestly being a Mormon and just opening up any small business is kind of a cheat code because you instantly have a super
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loyal base that will come and support you. Crumble Cookie is another great example. How did Crumble Cookie get so
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popular? They were started by two Mormon dudes in Utah. And the Mormons said, "Oh my god, it's it's a Mormon business.
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We're going to go patron the Mormon business." I had no idea. They stick together. They support each other's businesses. They raise each
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other's children. They show up. And now Crumble is like a multi-million dollar cookie company. How do you make millions
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of dollars making cookies, right? I don't know. They did it. The Mormons. You just be a Mormon, right? But all of that is just to say that like
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Brandon Sanderson had sort of a built-in audience that he tapped into and was able to rely on. And having that was
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able to boost him up to the next level and then the next level and from there was able to like create this whole is
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panacea the right word? I want to say it but I don't know if it's the right word. This whole panacea of a career.
pity me!!!.
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Mhm. So right around this time when she launches the Kickstarter, the tone of her videos really shifts and she starts
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doing a lot more emotional posting. And my dreams are literally depending on that. And quite honestly with the way
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that it's been going, I'm not sure it's possible. Oh, she's crying. She's talking about the
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writing process, the at some point she publishes a video talking about like the bone crushing
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pain and suffering that she feels as a talented person. But I just I need to
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put it into perspective for some people. I think it's important to see both the
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good and the bad um of talent.
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That's embarrassing. You know how you can really tell a talented person? They make videos about
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how talented they are. I know. I know. And she also is like cry because she just got dropped by this
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literary agent and she's saying things like, "I feel like my dreams are over. Like I feel really like she's really playing up this underdog thing." And I
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want to be careful about like accusing her of like totally manipulating her audience.

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Because there is something I've watched so many of Audrey Winter's videos and I just feel like there some some part of
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her is actually being very genuine. It is important to note that she is autistic. So like the way that she expresses emotion and communicates is
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going to be different than the way that you and I do it. Absolutely. But there is such a thing as pity marketing and she is very much engaging
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in that at this point for the Kickstarter. That's the thing like as an artist engaging in social media
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for the sake of selling something. That means everything you do is a form of marketing whether you like it or not.
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Very much. They could be genuine videos of her trying to complain about stuff. Yeah. What's more likely is she's doing
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it as a form of marketing for the sake of driving up viewership. Sure.
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Which is a little gross. So, I don't obviously don't know anything about Audrey Winters, but what did your mind
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or your what was your gut instinct on seeing some of these videos? So, she hadn't posted for two years. She
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had a literary agent. I assumed, and I can confirm this with some videos. We'll be putting in some of her Tik Tok videos
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here just to like confirm because I don't want to again like accuse her of anything that she didn't say or do. Yeah, she's still a person.
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She's a person. Um, but she started posting like um I got dropped by my literary agent because they wanted to
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change so many things about the book that uh really didn't align with my artistic vision and we just had to
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separate and that can be very painful and uh that could have been true. Um,
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but she spent two years away from her audience and she also started posting saying, "I'm not getting as much engagement as I was before. People
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aren't seeing my videos. I think I've been shadowbanned." So now she's also kind of fighting TikTok and the algorithm

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because I am shadowbanned right now and I cannot reach anybody on their for you page.
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I do not know what else to do. And I think the truth is you can't build a platform posting every single day
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getting into the good favors of the Tik Tok algorithm, gain 100,000 subscribers, and then walk away for two years and do
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nothing. Correct. And experience no change in viewership from that. You left for two years. If we don't post
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this podcast for two years, we're not going to get more subscribers. No. No. We're not going to suddenly go
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viral. No. Like that's not how the algorithm works. It only works if you're engaging with it. So she but she keeps uploading
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these videos being very emotional and promoting her Kickstarter and so she does get quite a few like donations to
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the to the fun to the thing. Yeah. To the thing.
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But I I cannot ever re handwrite this. I
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can't read this. Oh L. It's terrible. It's cursive. It's beautiful but I can't [__] read it.
16:54
Okay. That's right. So she the way that Kickstarter works is that you have to
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hit your goal or you don't get the money. Correct. So it became pretty clear that she was not going to hit the
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goal. She got close, but she wasn't going to hit it entirely. And just as a perspective, do you know what her goal was?
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I think it was like $20,000. Okay, that's not very much. I know it might have been more, but I think it was like $20,000. I could be so
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wrong. Um, but she canceled the Kickstarter and then like made a video and said, "Here's what we're going to do instead. I'm actually just going to move
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pre-orders for the book over to Tik Tok shop. I'm taking down the Kickstarter. Not only am I taking down the Kickstarter, I
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am moving the Age of Scorpius in its publication date from October to May. I will be self-publishing it. It is a
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definite it is going to happen and it is going to happen by May. Um because the
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uh that way like I don't have to like lose the money from the Kickstarter and like you the person who are investing is
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guaranteed a book because when you donate on Kickstarter, Kickstarter has like legal protections saying like you
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are donating to a Kickstarter and that means that this could never happen. This person could get this money and
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just pocket it and you could never get anything, right? That's that's happened to so many things on Kickstarter. Um,
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I actually, one of my first jobs in corporate video when I was first
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starting out was for a company called I Backpack. Um, which this sounds terrible.
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I have to be careful about how I talk about this, but this is a very real thing that was on Kickstarter and
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Indiegogo and it was run by a man. I will not say anybody's name. You can go look it up. I have backpack. Uh, and it
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ultimately ended up being, I want to say, like a Ponzi scheme. We got paid for our work. We made videos
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relating to the I backpack and that kind of thing and like product shots, stuff like that. And I believe the person who
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started I Backpack, it was one guy and ran the entire thing, eventually got indicted for fraud because he raised
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over a million dollars to produce this like super backpack that had batteries and Wi-Fi and all this stuff and then
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didn't deliver a single unit and just tried to take the money and run essentially. Um it is incredibly common,
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especially early on in the Kickstarter days, that that happened. Yes. You know, you and I are in the film
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industry, especially indie film. How many Kickstarter campaigns, how many crowdfunding campaigns have you seen
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where the filmmaker is trying to raise a little bit of money and doesn't hit it, you know? Or like more commonly like they do hit
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the goal, but then the movie never actually comes out for any reason. There are so many movies I have worked on that
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have never come out. Yes. And I don't know why. I think maybe they just ran out of funding during post or
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footage was lost or somebody in the main cast or crew died and like they just lost steam or like the director got
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bored and went on to another project. Like for any number of reasons projects can just up and poof and disappear. So
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it's actually pretty smart of Kickstarter to put in like you are not guaranteed anything. You are donating
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for all intents and purposes. You are donating to a cause that you believe in, but that doesn't mean that you're guaranteed an actual finished working
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product. In the same way that like when I donate to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund, that doesn't mean I'm guaranteed a cure.
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No, I'm just hoping that it comes around. I will say I think a book is probably one of the easier things to donate to on
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Kickstarter. Probably because it's it's typically like one person writing a book and then putting
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it out. at the very least you'll probably get a digital copy if not a print copy. And I think that was part of her uh
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original Kickstarter was like you'll get a like a digital copy of the book or something like that. So it's like you're
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donating but also you are kind of buying the book. It's pre-ordering but just in a different packaging.
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So I don't want to get too complicated with that. I know like when I start talking about pre-orders and percentages my brain starts to like
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sure do that thing I did in calculus. But for this basically she was on Kickstarter, didn't meet the number and now she's
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trying to move pre-orders to Tik Tok exclusively. Yes. So now let's talk about Tik Tok tiktok shop.
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shop which yeah, Tik Tok shop's got a lot of stuff about it. Here's the thing. You technically cannot
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sell pre-orders for books on Tik Tok shop. Okay, that is not allowed. What you can do,
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and what Audrey did was you can sell things like bookmarks for the price of a
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pre-order. I see. and she'll send you the bookmark and then when the book is actually done and ready, you will receive a book. It's
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but it's a little bit of like a wink and nudge like I'm going to send you a book just relax like trust me thing. It's kind of like conventions where
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comic artists go and they technically can't sell merchandise with like Batman
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on it even if they were an artist for Batman for 20 years. Yes. Which I think is [__] up. I what they
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sell is their signature. Mhm. And then you buy the signature and then they just happen to draw whatever they
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want to draw on the page that has their signature on it. Yes. And that's how people kind of skirt the
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the legal mumbo jumbo of um trademark law at comic conventions.
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Yes. Yeah. Right. So that's what she's doing. Yeah. She's doing something similar with bookmarks. Yes. And using Tik Tok shop it means
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that one she gets to keep most of the profit. So, let's say that she's selling a book for I think on Tik Tok she was
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selling it for about $24. She gets to keep about 22 of those 24.
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Now, that's a much better split than you get on say Amazon. Sure. Where the split is a little bit more
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it's closer to 50/50, right? For self-publishing. It's it's tough. And that's a lot that's a lot better of a margin than if you went

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traditional publishing. Way better. Yeah. Um,
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but Tik Tok shop also when you receive that bookmark technically in the eyes of
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Tik Tok shop, your order has been fulfilled. You spent $24 on a bookmark and you received it. So there's no
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recourse for you to go back in and say, "Hey, I like bought a pre-order for a book." Because technically Tik Tok shop
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doesn't allow that. Now other authors have done this. Audrey Winter is not the only person who's like taken advantage of like Tik Tok shop's loose moral rule
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compass thing. She's just like the most recent person, right, to take advantage of it. That makes sense. That makes sense.
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Yeah. Because there there would be no consumer protection on that. No. And it's important to note that Tik Tok shop is incentivized to push out
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products and sellers who are using Tik Tok shop because they get a percentage. They get a cut, right? So, it's definitely built into that
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algorithm that if you're somebody selling on Tik Tok shop, you get pushed out a lot more. And you can see that in
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her numbers because her numbers immediately start rising. That was a very common thing. uh back when Tik Tok introduced Tik Tok Shop is
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that creators who started using it, they were really pushing creators to start using Tik Tok shop. Yeah.
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And if you did, your numbers went up again because Tik Tok's a company. They want to make more money.
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Yeah. They're incentivized. They make money every time you sell something. Of course, they want you to use it. They don't care if if you're selling shirts or bookmarks or whatever.
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No. And you'll see a lot of creators on a video totally unrelated. They have a link to their Tik Tok shop and they're
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like selling hats. It's like I've clicked on plenty of videos that I'm like listening to somebody talk about a book and then there's a Tik Tok shop
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with like blankets and like links to random lamps and I'm like what is the and that's why it just helps you with
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the algorithm and it puts you in like the good favors of the Tik Tok gods. Yeah. So So Audrey Winters is trying to sell
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pre-orders by technically fraudulently selling bookmarks. Yes. With the promise
24:11
of a book to arrive at your address at some point in the future. Yes. Now, when this happens, she starts
bo$$ babe bonanza.
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getting a lot of pre-orders. Uhhuh. And her content shifts again. Oh boy.
24:23
And this time, she's not pity marketing. Now she's a boss babe. Uhhuh. Now she's an entrepreneur of a sixf
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figureure creative business. And I am now a six-f figureure business owner of a digital creative studio
24:38
and a boss of 15 to 20 employees. What?
24:43
She never gives a specific number. She always gives a range. It's never I'm
24:48
working with three artists for the book's art. It's always I'm working with seven to eight artists on this book or
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I'm working with 15 to 20 creative people to help me edit my book. It's never a specific number. And the thing is, you know how many people are on your
25:01
payroll. Yeah. You know how many people you work with. If you're the one running the show, if you're the one hiring them,
25:07
like 20 people is not a lot. You can fit them all in this room, right? Like we would know like, "Oh yeah, we hired Gary
25:13
the lighting guy and we and here are our editors." I'm just thinking in terms of like a short film.
25:18
Yes. Right. Like if I'm hiring for a short film, I know exactly how many people we're bringing on set.
25:24
Yes. Because I'm the one doing the hiring. I And I know I know exactly who's going to fill each role. So yeah, to to if I
25:30

asked a producer, oh, you made a short film, how many people did you have? I don't know, like 11 to 17. It's like
25:37
that's a big difference. That's a huge difference. Also like I you work on a feature film, you know
25:44
everybody who worked on that feature film. This is why you shouldn't lie about working on projects that you were not a part of because if it comes across
25:49
somebody who was on that project, they will know that you weren't there. Exactly. Like no, I was on Patunia.
25:55
Uhhuh. That you were not there. Exactly. I was there every day.
26:00
So her content takes a really hard shift and she also gets pretty condescending at this point.
26:08
So, this is one of her big selling points is she talks about the Malcolm Gladwell theory that you only need
26:14
10,000 hours of doing something to become a master. And she claims that she
26:19
is well above a master of the craft of writing because she has spent hundreds
26:25
of thousands of hours in order to achieve mastery. He says that one must spend 10,000 hours. I have
26:32
achieved mastery according to Malcolm Gladwell's theory. How old is she? writing. She's 21 at the
26:38
time that she was making this video. Oh my god. Okay. Yeah. So, and she also keeps posting things like, "I'm a child prodigy with
26:45
hundreds of thousands of words written by the time I was 15." Like, she's really leaning on this fact that like
26:51
I'm You don't need to pity me. You should respect me because I'm so smart and I'm so good at this and I'm also a
26:57
boss babe and I own a six-f figureure creative studio and I'm and I'm in charge of 15 to 20 to 30 maybe 50
27:03
people. This is my problem with people who like position themselves as, "Oh, I'm the
27:10
boss, babe. I'm an entrepreneur. 10,000 hours." It's like it is a such a gross
27:15

misunderstanding of what goes into becoming good and masterful at something. And it's that whole Malcolm
27:21
Gladwell thing is it's such an easy litmus test for who misunderstands
27:27
like these pneummonic devices that we associate with success. Yes. The whole 10,000 hours thing. I've read
27:33
that book. It's called Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell. It is a very good book. He says more than just 10,000
27:39
hours. It's 10,000 meaningful, purposeful hours. I was going to say 10,000 hours. I can
27:45
spend 10,000 hours studying Gaelic on Duolingo. Yes. And I will not be able to hold a conversation with somebody because
27:51
that's not challenging and it's not meaningful. It's kind of passive, right? Which is why it's a good language
27:56
learning tool, but it cannot be the only one that you're using to learn a language. I would have to I have to go to the
28:02
library. You have to get books. You have to do workbooks. You should probably get a tutor. You want to be writing things out. Put post-it notes all over your
28:08
room so that you start saying the English word and the Gaelic word. Like you have to actually spend 10,000
28:16
meaningful hours doing something. Not just writing alone in your room like
28:21
diary style just off the like that terrible article we read on Substack this morning, you know, like which we don't have to go
28:28
into because I think it'll make us both upset all over again. But the again the whole thing is like
28:34
it's not like you are working. You hit an hour 9,000 and you go, "Yeah, I'm not
28:40
there yet." And then you hit hour 10,000 and you go, "Okay, cool. I'm done growing in this thing. I am officially a
28:46
master. I have arrived. I have no more places to go." It's like that's not how it works.
28:51
No. Like it's a it's an idiom. It's an idiom of how much time and effort it takes to
28:57

get good at something. Yeah. To be an expert at something. It's actually supposed to be I take it as like a comforting thing. Like we can use
29:03
ice skating because you've been ice skating since you were like 2 years old. Little tiny which makes me very emotional. The idea of tiny Connor ice
29:10
skating. I need you to lock in. I need you to lock in.
29:16
I think about your little skate. Oh my god. You do see you do see those tiny little skates at the rental shop. They're just
29:22
like this big. Nothing makes me want a baby more than looking at those little skates. I swear to God. I'm a very happy childless woman
29:29
and then I see those skates and I'm like I'm going to need 14 of those right now. I'm need 14 little tiny babies. Um but
29:34
so you have logged your 10,000 meaningful hours. Yeah. I started skating when I was about two or three. Before I can remember
29:41
anything, I was skating, right? And you and I have been ice skating together five or six times.
29:47
And I've gone ice skating a handful of times before that. And I get frustrated because I'm not great yet. I can barely
29:54
go backwards, which is like a huge feat for me. But I still am not good at stopping. I don't have like good tiny
30:00
motor skills in my feet because they're not used to doing it. And I get very frustrated because I think I'm 28 years
30:05
old. I've been in this body for 28 years. Like I should be able to do whatever I want to do with it. But
30:10
hearing 10,000 hours is at least how long it takes, right? To meaningfully practice and get good at
30:16
something is so comforting because I'm like, "Oh, I'm only like 30 hours in." Yeah. Of course, I'm not good at this. You
30:22
you've probably done a cumulative like 24 hours of skating. Yes. Maybe across your entire life.
30:28
So, of course, I'm not good. Across. And that means you've done less than an hour of skating a year for your
30:34

entire life. When it comes to gaining expertise in a subjective field, a
30:40
subjective artistic field like writing, how do you measure the level of expertise that a writer has? It's
30:46
typically not with like, oh, 10,000 hours of writing bad books have now made
30:52
me a good writer. You know, even somebody like Brandon Sanderson who's
30:57
written hundreds of thou, no, millions of words on the page would tell you, I'm
31:02
still growing as a writer. Yeah. You know, and that's the difference is that someone who really loves it and is
31:09
in it for the artistic merit of the thing isn't going to go, "Yep, I'm done
31:14
growing. I've reached my my pinnacle expertise at this skill. Yeah. You know, which we're going to talk about that a little bit. I'm not sure how interested
31:22
in writing Audre Winter is as much as she is in world building. I think her real love sits in like
31:28
big picture Yeah. world building, not the actual minutia of writing cuz wow, some things are going to be
31:36
said here in a minute. Okay. So people start raising some eyebrows during this boss girl era because she was just
31:43
crying like literally a month before. This is how short these timelines are. A month before she was weeping on TikTok
31:48
saying like I'm being shadowbanned. I got dropped by my literary agent. Like everything is against me. Like I'm just trying my best to make this this fantasy
31:55
novel come to life. And now suddenly she's sitting in her car being like I own a creative studio and I am a master of writing and like what have you ever
32:01
done kind of thing. And people are also wondering like how, where, why, where did this money come from? like how many
32:07
pre-orders are you actually getting? And she claims that she got thousands of pre-orders for this book and that's
32:12
where that money is coming in, which is extremely unusual. I broke through in the publishing
32:18
industry and became the owner of a six-f figureure business and a full-time

32:24
author on only pre-orders. If you're unfamiliar with publishing, wellestablished authors struggle to get
32:31
thousands of pre-orders set. Mhm. So, it's like unheard of. debut novel for a new writer. Unbelievable. And that
32:38
number is going to reach about 6,500 pre-orders for this book. Oh my god. For a first time published
32:44
author. Yes. Now, it's very unclear again like I can't confirm these numbers anywhere. This is all coming from Audra, but the
32:51
fact that she was able to hire some people to work for her. Clearly, there's money,
32:58
right? And like she doesn't have a full-time job. This is her full-time job. She's now running this creative studio, right? So,
33:03
I'm just trying to do some quick math. So, at $25 a pop Yeah. for
33:09
6500 books. Yeah. Now, she fudges these numbers. Later, she's going to say 7,000 pre-orders. 6,500.
33:16
Maybe it's 6,000. So, again, anywhere between 6 and 7,000 pre-orders for this book.
33:21
Yeah. But that could be anywhere between like 200,000 to $300,000 in pre-order sales.
33:26
Insane. Insane numbers. Um, she also starts changing the tune about
33:33
the literary agent. Now, the literary agent uh didn't drop her. She voted to
33:38
leave. I ultimately made the decision to go indie again because I wanted to retain
33:45
creative freedom over my world and I knew my book was ready due to artistic differences. Okay. So, she's rewriting history a
33:50
little bit. She's rewriting history a little bit. Now it's like when she wanted pity, she was saying they dropped me. Um uh
33:57
because we just, you know, they didn't really respect my vision and it was really hard to work with them and I wasn't doing what they wanted so they dropped me. And now she's saying I left
34:05
because she's in her boss girl era and boss girls don't get fired. Yeah. They can't admit that something went wrong for them,

34:10
right? So let's skip to the end of June. Okay. This year 2025.
34:17
Oh Jesus. Okay. So, June 2025, the book comes out.
reviews....
34:22
It actually released. Yes. It's not a fake book. It's not a fake book. It is a real book. Okay.
34:28
The reviews are bleak. Though midwinter raged throughout the rest of the Guardian,
34:33
Conviction Woods kept its humid warmth year round. Then on the very next page, it says, "Though mid-winter raged
34:39
throughout the rest of the Guardian, Conviction Woods kept its human warmth all year long. Scorpio Aries leaders,
34:46
two sign leaders, largest lower sign, stellarium.
34:52
Huh? Verina extanded her hand to me. A neglect of a choice I didn't have in the eyes of the Stellarium. The word neglect
34:59
there doesn't make any [__] sense. My magic jumped to life underneath the moonlight, illuminating her body and my
35:05
own in an ancient dance of blood and store.
35:13
What am I reading? Age is not an excuse for sentences like this to be in the finished product of an
35:19
expensive book that people were they were promised something and something else was delivered.
35:25
The book is unreadable. Oh no. It's not just grammatical error here
35:31
like weird maybe like some tropes used here. It is unreadable throughout most
35:37
of it. Oh man. So, she's been working on this project for 10 years. 10 years. She's a master of the craft of writing.
35:44
She was considered a child prodigy with hundreds of thousands of words written before I was 15.
35:50
She has rewritten the book six times. She worked with the editor of The Hunger Games, which she kept claiming this in
35:57

her videos. She was not an editor on the Hunger Games. She was part of the marketing team in the UK for The Hunger
36:02
Games. So, big difference there. She had the binders. She had the artists. She had the diagrams, the graphs, the family
36:08
trees. All of that for a book that sounds like this. Oh boy.
36:14
Aia followed me in, her voice carrying through the hallway like an echo chamber, loud, distinctive, and most
36:20
importantly, my sister's voice.
36:27
It was held above Aia's shoulders with societal pressure.
36:33
What does that mean? What does that even mean? I don't know. My favorite, a guilt crept through me.
36:40
A guilt just any you know when a physical guilt creeps through you.
36:45
It's very clear to me that this book has not been properly edited. But it also raises an interesting question like at
36:51
what point is a book not editable. And it makes me think about this literary agent because if I'm her literary agent,
36:56
I signed her obviously because she's getting all this attention online and she's writing a fantasy novel that is inspired by the zodiac signs which money
37:04
money. That literally checks so many boxes that an agency would want to have on their roster.
37:10
Oh my god. And she's autistic and she's writing in like a queer storyline which
37:15
money every there's so much money pouring out of this agent's face. Like it's insane because Are you familiar with Zodiac Academy?
37:21
I'm not. Zodiac Academy is another like I think it's a romantic genre that is again inspired by the Zodiac
37:28
that I I would imagine it's a pretty common trope. It's very common to use, but Zodiac Academy is like the most uh popular one
37:34
that kind of pops into my head when I hear this premise. And that book printed money and is so popular and loved by the
37:40

book talk romance genre girls. So I it's not surprising that she gets signed by a
37:45
literary agent, but then she turns in what I assume is like a first draft uh of this book and the literary agent
37:51
must have said, "This is not readable." Right? You need major edits, not just
37:56
developmental edits, but like line edits. And at some point after two years of going back and forth, the agent said, "I
38:02
can't work with you, right? You're not you're not hearing me. You're not doing what needs to be done for the story to
38:09
make sense." And the relationship ended, right? Well, and you got to think from from an agency perspective, it's kind of
38:15
like a polar bear. Agencies are polar bears where a polar bear has to eat so
38:21
much a day. And every single second they spend not eating or hunting, it's a
38:27
calculation physiologically of calories in versus calories out. How much time am
38:33
I going to spend trying to break into this ice shelf to get to this seal? You know, and they know like what the
38:38
calculation is in their head. If I spend six hours burning calories, trying to
38:43
break through the ice shelf to get to the seal, that's not worth it for me. I've officially burned more calories than I would get from eating the seal.
38:50
And agencies are the same way. They're very predatory in that way because they have to be they cut. They're cut throat.
38:56
They have they're trying to make money. So from the agents perspective, you have to imagine, okay, we got this new writer. She's already got the marketing built
39:03
in. We don't have to spend any money on the marketing. No, we've got a built-in audience already. We all the only money we have
39:09
to spend is trying to hook her up with editors, with book agents that could help her with the cover, with the art,
39:15
artists, that kind of thing. So to go back and forth for two years at year three, you're officially like, "Okay,
39:21

we've spent more money than this book can even bring in. There's no way that we could recoup this. We have to drop
39:27
her, right?" It's strictly like a business standpoint thing, you And another thing that is like a real red
love letter to all editors.
39:33
flag to me is she posted on Tik Tok that she was looking for editors in February
39:38
of 2025. I am already in talks with editors. Um quite honestly I'm super honored to be
39:44
considered by some of the editors who I am looking into hiring with the intention of originally
39:50
publishing the book in May. Oh no. That is not nearly enough time.
39:56
No. for editors to do multiple editors to do passes and then for you to
40:01
incorporate their suggestions, right? Because at a certain point, I I don't know how common it is for every
40:06
author. It's like you write the book, you get notes back, you get feedback. When you're getting ready to publish,
40:11
you go through editors and that kind of thing. And even after that, you're not publishing it. You might go through a
40:17
round of alpha readers or beta readers to get like true feedback. Yes. And that's another thing. She didn't have any advanced reader copies
40:23
sent out really, which is extremely unusual. No beta readers. Insane. That is cuz you have to know what the
40:29
audiences think of it. It's like not doing test screenings for a movie you're about to send out to theaters. Yeah. Like you you need that feedback or else
40:36
you won't know what to expect from an audience. Well, and this is one of my big problems with self-publishing books is in order
40:43
for a book to be as strong as it possibly can be, the writer needs to
40:48
write a good story. Yes. And then it needs to go through several people. Yeah.
40:53
Several editors. You want a developmental editor who's going to tell you like this part of the story doesn't make sense. Let's focus in on this
40:59

relationship. Can we combine these characters cuz it's a little confusing? They do like these big like general sweeping story edits. And then you have
41:05
the line editors who go in and they say you already used this word or we're repeating information or this preposition is misplaced or you're
41:11
misusing this word. Like they go in with like a finetothed comb and really like help you chisel it out.
41:17
Sure. And then it goes to proof readers and then you do like another round of edits and then you want to send out some beta copies and then they send back
41:25
information and it it goes through so many people before it hits the shelves at your local Barnes & Noble for just
41:31
like your local reader to pick up. So like by the time the book is in a person's hands, a person who spent
41:37
physical money on your book, it should have gone through 15 people
41:42
before it got there. And even then, even books that are traditionally published that go through that intense process,
41:48
they still have typos. Things still get missed. It's shocking because it's
41:54
tough. A book can be 500, 600 pages long. It is impossible to catch every single thing, especially if you are just
42:00
doing everything by yourself, right? And like hiring in-house, right? Impossible to catch everything. So, like
42:06
self-publishing books is like a good option if you're new and you can't get
42:12
in traditionally because it's very tough to get traditionally published and you just want to share the story with somebody. But you are going to miss
42:18
grammatical errors. You are going to miss simple developmental changes that should have been suggested by
42:23
professional editors. You're going to miss like a professionallymade title. You're going to miss the marketing. Like
42:28
you sacrifice so much quality when you choose to self-publish, right? And it's important to say it's
42:34

like it's not just overall quality of the thing. It's more like market quality because editors, marketers, marketing
42:42
teams, artistic teams for traditional publishers, it's not that they make the book better by virtue of the fact that
42:48
they touch it. It's more that it's like it makes it more widely available to an audience that you're trying to connect with,
42:53
which is the point of writing, by the way. Exactly. The whole point of writing a book is like, I have a story that I want
42:59
to tell. So, I'm going to try to translate it from my language to a language that other people can understand. And the
43:06
only way to make sure that you do that is by working with other people, right? Otherwise, you're just in an echo
43:11
chamber of your own mind. Yeah. And that's the thing. You don't want to sell a book who would only only
43:17
one person would buy, right? Or that only you understand. What's the point? But I you're right. Like I've heard
43:22
there's a writer I used to follow who said, "Yeah, my last book I remember uh traditionally published went through all
43:29
these rounds of edits, all these proof readers, and I get my advanced reading copy after the the day it went out,
43:37
looked at the first page, typo on the first page, all of that, all those people, and
43:42
things still get missed." Yeah. And it's like, yes, you can't catch everything. You can't you can't catch everything.
43:47
Even a team of people can't catch everything. So, it's not surprising to me that this book that you gave two
43:54
editors that you just sourced, I think through her audience, but maybe she used like a professional website or source or
44:00
something, but she hired two editors, one developmental and one copy editor, confirmed to go through this book. And you gave
44:06
them a couple of months to go through this book that has 39 chapters.

44:12
Oh my god. And deliver notes to you. And then you gave yourself a couple of months to implement all of those edits. That's not
44:18
nearly enough time. No, you should take a year at least for this whole process. Yeah, that's like um gosh uh Christian
44:25
Jones, is that her name? On YouTube. Yeah, she makes videos on she's uh she's an author. She's part of
44:31
like author tube. Uh you and I both like watching her videos and she recently got her publishing deal with her most recent
44:36
book and she vlogs about her whole experience. She's been working on this for years
44:43
from like con concept uh conceptually, what is the word I'm looking for? like
44:49
creating like the concept of the story to outlining the story to writing the story to querying and then to like editing the story and
44:55
getting it ready for publishing years. Years and that's the thing she talks about how grueling of a process it can
45:01
be cuz like she finished the book I believe like eight months ago but she is still working on it every
45:07
single day. I think she finished it a longer than that but then her editor came back and was like if we want to publish it here
45:14
the things that need to be done and it was like major sweeping edits. And it's not because Christian Jones is
45:20
a bad writer. It's just if you want this book to be read by a wide audience and understood, these are the edits that can
45:25
take place. Editors are wonderful. They they make or break a project. It's so important. Brandon Sanderson worked with
45:31
the same editor for most of his books and then that guy retired and now he has a new editor working with him and the books are noticeably different. Right.
45:38
Yeah. There's there's a distinct difference. I won't say lack of quality. It's still Brandon Sanderson's quality
45:43
of writing. But I will say the audiences of Brandon Sanderson's books notice a

45:49
difference between it's specifically the Stormlight Archive between book one, two, and three, which had his original
45:55
editor, and books four and five, which were less liked, I believe, by
46:00
wider audiences. Yeah. Myself included. Like I I noticed a difference by the end of them. And I think the person the
46:06
genre we really want editors for kind of a continued thing is fantasy and science fiction. Oh, you need it
46:12
because uh so many fantasy authors work with the same editor. And I think part of that is like having another person
46:19
who's with you from book one and understands the entire concept of the story start to finish. That is a vital
46:25
resource. So important. That is a vital resource that fantasy authors need to have on their side.
46:30
Yeah. Because you can just forget stuff without realizing it. Brandon Sanderson has an entire in-house team in his
46:36
company that is their entire job is continuity and making sure that their book the books that he writes agree with
46:42
each other and the timeline of events that he's laid them out agree with each other. It's a full-time job that he has.
46:47
Yeah. You know, and that's something else that happened in the Age of Scorpius is like she would repeat phrases like from chapter to
46:53
chapter. Like there's a part where she describes a map that her father made for her, like drew for her, and she keeps it
46:59
in her pocket. And then like a page later, she is describing a map that her father bought at a market for her and
47:05
she keeps it in her pocket. And it's like this is first draft stuff. Like when you're writing a fantasy novel especially, there's so many tiny details
47:12
and like things that you plant that you never go back to or like things that you forget that you already included. And
47:17

again, that's why it's important that you have a team and why it's important that you rewrite your drafts. And that's another thing. All these reviews start
47:24
flooding in and saying, "This book has not been edited." And Audrey gets very defensive immediately and says, "It has
47:29
been edited. I've rewritten it six times. I did something wrong." At first, it was like, "I can't tell what I did wrong
47:35
because I felt like I had done everything right up to that point. I had hired editors. I had done everything that I could to my best ability because
47:42
I am one person." But what she's talking about is any time that she gets suggested revisions, she
47:48
starts over and starts a whole new draft. Are you serious? Yeah. Oh my god. Changing major plot points and
47:55
characters and relationships. Which like that means you have six first drafts,
48:00
not a sixth draft. It it's not uncommon for writers to write a full draft and then go, you know
48:06
what, I think it needs more work. And then do another full draft from the start. Yeah. It is entirely different to go, I've
48:12
written the draft, it's done and ready. It's ready for editing. That's a different process because now when
48:17
you're editing it's like we're we're kind of locked on the story in terms of where we want to start, where we want to finish. Now we're going to adjust things
48:23
in the center, keeping the story relatively the same. I've heard of a lot of writers who go, "Yeah, I wrote I rewrote the first draft
48:30
about seven or eight times." Yeah. And then we locked it and started editing it once I was happy with the first draft.
48:35
I haven't heard that so much. Maybe that's more popular in books. I've heard with scripts that you can write as you
48:41
can rewrite the script four or five times. It's very common. Like, but you have a first draft and then you usually
48:48
rewrite. A lot of writers will write a second draft, maybe a third draft, and then send that one out to people for

48:53
notes, right? Because the first two or three drafts are basically unreadable. Yeah, they are. My first drafts are awful.
49:01
I did go to school for this. I've been doing this for a second. I've been writing scripts for a long time. You have your 10,000 hours.
49:06
I've got my 10,000 hours, but man, those first drafts are rough. And it's the same thing that happens in novel
49:12
writing. plant things and totally forget about it. I like I create way too many characters. All I need is five, but I I
49:18
create 50. And I like the logic doesn't make any sense. I'm like, why has this character been at football practice for
49:24
24 hours? I don't understand. Where is the child? Oh, wait. She has a job and we haven't seen her at work one time.
49:30
That doesn't make any sense. Why has it been raining for seven days in Southern California? That where are we? Like all
49:36
those things you can lose track of because you're trying to do a lot. telling a really complex story is very
49:42
difficult and you've got your mind on other things for the first draft. So, you have to do several passes before the thing even makes sense and can be read
49:51
by another person who can give you notes and be like, "Okay, well, you said this was a comedy, but it's not very funny. So, maybe make it funny,
49:58
you know, but if you're just throwing out the draft and starting from scratch every time,
50:03
again, that's a first draft. It is. It's a new first draft. It's a new So, you've created you've created six first drafts. you're not on
50:10
the sixth draft of the book. And I would say that like the when we talk about the mastery of artistic
50:16
creation like this, uh it makes me think of the conversation that Jonah Hill had
50:21
about Martin Scorsesi where he's like the difference between any director that I've worked with in
50:27

the past and someone like Martin Scorsesi who's been working his entire career for like 60 years in filmm as a
50:34
director is the speed at which he can make decisions that are important.
50:39
Right? He says it's like playing chess. When you're playing chess against someone, you can look ahead a couple of moves and
50:46
think, okay, well, if I do that, they'll do this, then I can do that, they'll do this, and you can kind of think of a
50:52
different a few different lines to follow. Whereas someone like Martin Scorsesi, when they're presented with a
50:57
problem, he takes a second, he goes, "Okay, let's do this instead." and
51:03
creates an entirely different plan to pivot unto that basically solves the
51:09
entire problem without even blinking. That's what mastery looks like. And I think the same is probably true for
51:15
things like writing where it's not that you become a better quality writer. Maybe you do, but you're more capable of
51:23
take screenwriting an example. You're better at working through second draft issues. You're better at ending stories,
51:29
right? You're better at working through problems that your antagonist might have on the page
51:35
or killing your darlings or killing your darlings. Like recognizing what is actually not worth the the energy and making something and
51:42
being like, I really like this scene, but it doesn't actually serve the larger story and it will it will waste time. Yeah.
51:49
And you never want to waste your audience's time. Never. So, all these reviews come out. They're saying the book is not edited, but
audra's response.
51:55
Audrey Winter is saying, "No, no, no, it was edited. Um, you guys don't know what you're talking about. Um, but I hear
52:01
you. Um, we're gonna halt production of this particular version of the book.
52:06
Okay. And I'm going to audition. She uses the word audition editors from my audience.

52:12
Stop. And they're going to edit the manuscript and we're going to re-release a hard cover with sprayed edges in December.
52:19
We're re-releasing the entire thing. I am recruiting a copy editor and a proofreader from my audience. I will be
52:25
opening auditions for that on Tuesday. It's literally just going through the first chapter of the book and marking it
52:31
up as much as you can. And the features of the book, different cover, different interior, different end pages, sprayed
52:37
edges. We're going all out. We're going all out. And she posts this in August. So again,
52:45
not giving nearly enough time considering the weaknesses of the book. It's not like a there's a misprint. No.
52:52
like there's a a blank page where there needs to be a page of or like a typo on the first page that is very easily
52:57
fixed. The whole book needs to go back to the drawing board. You're on draft one. You need to get to draft six
53:05
and imag August to December is five minutes. Yeah. And imagine being one of the people that bought the pre-orders and
53:12
here and seeing that video come out. Yeah. Like she also like she offered some deal. I'm
53:18
a little fuzzy on the details where she was like, "You can you can order for a full re I don't even think she offered
53:24
full refunds because that money has been spent, right?" So, I think it was more like you'll get a free copy of like the new book, like a
53:31
digital copy, and then you'll also get 50% off a new paperback. I don't know. uh she she presented some
53:38
deal whatever the deal was not equitable not equable to what people have already spent and
53:44
again when you sell a pre-ordered book to somebody only to go actually the book is not
53:49
great uh we're going to re-release it later on this year in a more expensive version that people can purchase like
53:56

that just feels kind of like a slap in the face that people have been supporting you from day one it does you know and Audra is very
54:02
defensive and has been very defensive ever since these reviews came out she claims that all of the initial reviews
54:08
were super positive until one indie author on Tik Tok named TS Lewis
54:13
released a negative review kind of um and then ever since then the
54:18
tide turned and now suddenly everybody hates the book. One negative review really just tanked the whole project and the thing is TS Lewis doesn't even
54:24
name her or the book in his review because they're creators on the same platform. I finished one of the worst fantasy
54:30
books I've ever read and we're going to talk about it. I'm talking about I'm not going to mention the author. I don't
54:35
want to give them any unwarranted hate from any people. I only have 200 followers, so I doubt that happened.
54:40
Anyways, so his whole thing was like, this is a debut author. She's young. She's on the platform with me.
54:47
I'm not going to name her and like trash the book. And his video was so respectful, so rooting for her. He's
54:54
like, you know, sometimes the first book that you publish is not the first book that you write. Like it's perfectly acceptable
55:01
for you to write a book that you love that you that really means a lot to you and to not publish it. But the minute
55:06
that you expect money from people, it needs to be of a certain quality. Exactly. And this book is not of that quality.
55:12
And I think this shows that like marketing something a certain way is not equivalent to writing a good book
55:19
and like you should be careful what like marketing schemes you guys fall for kind of thing. But again, didn't name her and
55:24
didn't name the book. But Audrey figured out that it was about her and now blames
55:29

this indie author for everything. And the truth is, I looked into this. The book came out at the end of June.
55:36
Okay. One-star reviews were coming in as early as the first week of July. Oh wow. So people received their books, read
55:43
them quickly, and then immediately published negative reviews. There was no influx of great fivestar reviews, and
55:50
then the tide turned. Like there were negative reviews from the moment that book became publicly available. Well, damn. She should have she should have
55:56
spent some of her money on bots, like review bots. But you and I talk about this a lot because I think what you touched on is incredibly true, which is
56:03
like as a writer, you can write whatever you want. Absolutely. You can absolutely write
56:09
whatever and self-publishing allows you to do that. But the expectation of being paid for
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that is different, right? I could write a fantasy novel about mermaids and myrr
56:22
people uh wanting to ride horses and grow wings. That probably won't sell
56:29
very well. I'm really interested in that. I'm really interested in writing that book. That doesn't mean people are
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going to buy that. You know, once you try to sell a book to people, you have to understand what people would pay
56:40
money to do. This is the thing. This is something else that I wanted to talk about is like authors are historically very bad at
56:48
taking criticism and it's very difficult for them to separate constructive criticism
56:53
and just hatred. Yeah. Very few times have I actually seen an
56:58
author receive just hatred. We hate what you wrote. We hate you. Stop writing.
57:03
Kill yourself. Like no one is saying that. It's always duh this didn't really land. it was
57:10
marketed a certain way and like it really didn't follow through. It didn't really make a lot of sense.
57:15
There were grammatical errors. I think you relied too much on art and like special borders on chapters like and the

57:22
writing quality is just not there. This happened with uh Gabby Hannah. Are you familiar with Gabby Hannah? I've not heard of Gabby Hannah.
57:28
Gabby Hannah was a content creator from Vine and then became and then came on YouTube. So, she's she's a content
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creator who's been around for a long time. She's not really doing stuff so much anymore, but she started publishing poetry books.
57:38
And her poetry books were very uh Instagram.
57:44
Sure. Very like shallow. Yeah. Like she had it would like be a whole
57:49
blank page and then just a little text bubble that says K. And that was a poem.
57:54
Oh man. Like just kind of lazy and very like And then I think she sold the book for like
58:00
$25. And it it's like I'm 14 and this is deep type [__]
58:06
Yeah. And then of course the negative reviews started rolling in. People were like this was not worth the $25 that I
58:11
spent on it. And she became very defensive. And she was like that book got me through so many hard times in my life. That book means so much to me. I
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love poetry. I love writing. I'm a good writer. So this book gave me a lot of power to open up about that I've been
58:23
swallowing for years. And I know that a lot of people who have read it um got it because they've had similar experiences.
58:30
So, and people were like, "It's awesome that it means something to you, but you're charging other people $25."
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So, now we are entitled to tell you what we thought about it. You invite criticism when you take
58:43
money. Yeah. If my personal journal was stolen out of my house and then became publicly
58:49
available, that would be different. Yeah. But I'm purposefully putting it on Amazon and charging people $25. That
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means I'm inviting all the criticism into into my life. Well, it's like literally any business that exists. When
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you sell something to someone else by virtue of the fact that they have given you money,
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they get to go, I liked this or I didn't like this. Negative reviews at restaurants, people
59:15
are allowed to leave those if they didn't have a good experience at your restaurant. I paid money for this. It did not meet my expectations.
59:20
Yeah, that's what you invite into your world once you start selling product. As soon as you take money, that is what every business has to deal
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with. Yes. And it's important to understand that's a good thing. You want that as a business, as an artist, you want
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feedback because if if the feedback you're getting is, uh, I didn't like it. It
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doesn't feel worth it. Blah, blah, blah. That's that's an important thing to understand and internalize to make
59:44
things better for your audience. Yes. And there is a balance. I don't think authors should live in their
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reviews and read every single one that comes out because you'll drive yourself crazy because for most books you're
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going to even really popular authors, you're going to get people who are like, I think this is the best thing ever. I think this is the worst thing ever.
1:00:01
Really easy example, Taylor Swift just released her new album. There are going to be some people who were like, "This is the best stuff she's released in
1:00:07
years. It's so vulnerable. It's so new. It's so fresh. It's so fun." And there's going to be plenty of people who are like, "She is so worn out. There is
1:00:13
nothing new that she can say. How many times is she going to write a middle school dance song?" Yes, you're going to get both. And if she
1:00:19
lives in those reviews, it will just paralyze her. She won't ever be able to write anything again. So, I think it's
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important simultaneously to take some feedback that you're getting from like trusted sources, people that you know
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and trust, and also like blocking out some of the other stuff. People who dislike your
1:00:36

stuff just because you're a woman or just because you wrote a queer storyline, I think it's okay to ignore those people. But people who ordered
1:00:43
your pre who pre-ordered your debut novel and spent 24 of their hard-earned dollars on your new book,
1:00:50
who wrote reviews saying things like, "I'm disappointed. Like, you really sold me on the art and the writing is simply
1:00:55
not there." You need to hear that. That's really important. Those are your fans. Those are your true fans. They're the only
1:01:02
ones who are going to supplement your life. The only reason you're able to do anything in your life right now is because other people gave you money.
1:01:08
Yes. And they're disappointed. Yes. How how do you not sit with that?
1:01:14
Exactly. There's two things that I feel from that. It's uh you and I have talked about this a lot when it comes to
1:01:21
screenwriting specifically where you as a writer, I'm sure, have gotten plenty of notes on screenplays that you've
1:01:27
written. Countless notes. I'm sure you have also had to learn how to
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receive a note, how to discern what a good note is from a bad note, how to understand the note underneath the note.
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So that's something they talked about at USC all the time was what's the note behind the note because some people like other writers are going to know how to
1:01:46
give you a note. Absolutely. They're they're going to be able to pinpoint exactly what the problem is and how to fix it and what you're going for.
1:01:52
So they're not making the script more like something they would write. They're making it more like something you want to write.
1:01:57
Exactly. But producers and studio executives do not know how to give you notes most of the time. Typically not.
1:02:02
They're just going to say things like, "I don't know. It's just kind of boring at this point." And you have to know what they what they mean by that. And
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it's that's a really important part of writing is like receiving notes from your editor, from your team, from your

1:02:13
partner, from your friends, from your producer and knowing what to leave and
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what to take. Yeah, you got to pick your battles. That's the thing like the way I give notes typically to uh my screenwriter
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friends who want notes from me is I don't tell them you should adjust this thing on page whatever. I say, okay,
1:02:30
here's what I got from your script. here's how it made me feel and here are
1:02:36
the themes that I picked up on. That's just what I that that is my experience as an audience. And it allows them to
1:02:43
go, okay, cool. I didn't I didn't want that. I did want this. I didn't expect
1:02:48
that. Right? It allows them to dissect pieces where there might be some inongruency.
1:02:54
It's collaborative. And I think what we're seeing here is an artist who is very reticent to give up any control.
1:03:00
Any control or any allow any collaboration. Yeah, it's it's a very resistant, right? And again, it's the it is kind of
1:03:07
the poison of the girl boss problem. It's awful, right? Where it's like I am the best and I no note can uh touch me really
1:03:15
because naturally to be a boss babe means that you already know everything. So if you're taking on collaborators and
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notes, it's like, oh well, that runs counter to the persona that you're playing. Exactly. I thought you already knew everything. Why are you getting notes? You know, the
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best the best piece of creative advice I ever got from someone was uh when you
1:03:32
start to doubt certain things about your artistic vision or the quality of the
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thing you're making, go to the review page of your favorite movie. Find your favorite movie and filter the reviews by
1:03:48
least liked by one star. Go to your favorite movie and filter by one star reviews. And
1:03:55
you'll see some reviews are like, "Ah, [__] sucks. I didn't get it." You'll also see reviews that are 10,000 words
1:04:01

long and distinctly break down every single thing about the movie that is incorrect. And you to the point where
1:04:08
you go, "Dude's got a point. Can't help it." You know, it's like that's that's
1:04:13
kind of the art world. You you never get to perfect anything. There's always going to be people who can perfectly
1:04:19
dissect something and break it down to the point where it's like, "Yeah, yeah, I can't disagree with you." That's
1:04:24
that's exactly right, you know. Yeah, there are moments in every movie there where I go, "Oh,
1:04:29
I I didn't like that." Exactly. That was not good. Very few movies are not like that for me.
1:04:36
So Audrey releases a video on TikTok as a response to a growing number of bad reviews and reactions. And in part, she
1:04:42
says, quote, I had been contracted by a literary agency and worked with
1:04:47
development editors there. I made the choice to go independent when my literary agency dropped all their sci-fi
1:04:53
fantasy writers. End quote. So again, did she leave or was she dropped? She
1:04:59
switches the language depending on what she wants. And it really actually cannot be both.
1:05:05
And it's worth noting that this literary agency still has all of their fantasy and sci-fi writers on their website. And
1:05:11
also, no literary agency is firing all of their fantasy writers right now. That's the money maker.
1:05:17
I was literally just about to say that. I was like, "Oh, this agency who has writers on staff dropped all of their
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fantasy and science fiction writers in the in the biggest literal contemporary
1:05:28
boom for science fiction and fantasy." Why would they do that? Why would they do that? They didn't they wouldn't
1:05:33
they wouldn't do it. I really believe this is just my opinion. I really believe they were trying to edit her
1:05:39
book and she was so resistant to any notetaking Yeah. that they just dropped her because they couldn't get the book to a place that

1:05:45
they could actually publish it. I I mean, here's the thing. You and I have met people like this before. Oh my god. Who won't edit their scripts?
1:05:51
Who won't edit their scripts. They think everything is perfect. No matter how many notes you give them, they won't edit their scripts. No. So, yeah, I believe exactly what you
1:05:58
said is probably ran into headbutting over editing notes. Yeah. Because of well, my script is perfect.
1:06:04
My book is perfect. I don't have to change anything. Or she just kept rewriting the whole thing starting over and they're like, you keep giving us first drafts. Like,
1:06:10
why is this not getting better? I don't understand. And then the agent's like, well, let's get you into some classes. Yes. She also
1:06:17
says in this same video, quote, "I marketed that I wanted to break away from the industry that I felt trapped under. I wrote different. I wrote to
1:06:24
tell a story. I wrote as an art, and I tried my very best to convey to readers that I knew my writing was different."
1:06:29
End quote. The fact that there are typos and grammatical errors, not only in this
1:06:35
post, but in most of her Tik Tok posts, really communicates to me that her audience was sold purely by the
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commissioned art and like the visuals and the aesthetic of the book they thought they were getting. We've all
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seen these like aesthetic videos like if you're into things that feel like this, then you'll love this. And there's like
1:06:52
pictures of bats and like women by the water doing this and then a mermaid under the sea like in dark water and
1:06:58
then the moon and they're like, "Then you'll love this fantasy novel." And it's Zodiac Academy 99% of the time.
1:07:04
They're just trying to sell me Zodiac Academy. Uh because
1:07:09
just because you're a writer doesn't mean that you're never going to have typos and you're never going to have like a grammatical error. And like we all speak like with colloquialisms and
1:07:15

like you and I speak very casually. I use words incorrectly sometimes because we're just speaking off the cuff. Is
1:07:21
panacea the right word? I want to say it but I don't know if it's the right word. Totally natural. Like you don't have to be a perfect writer all the time.
1:07:27
There's something that my friend Lauren Peace and I talked about years ago. Um cuz I was dating somebody who would like
1:07:32
correct my grammar if I ever spoke incorrectly and it really drove me crazy. And she was like, "Yeah, as a journalist like there are plenty of
1:07:38
people in my life who do that who want to like nitpick." and she's like, "I've had to get that out of my head because
1:07:43
it's completely unnatural and I just want to talk to my friends without having to correct all the time." Yeah. So, just because you're a writer and
1:07:48
you're online doesn't mean that everything has to be perfect. You're a fiction writer, though, and you're saying things like, "I wrote as
1:07:55
an art. I wrote different. You mean you write differently?
1:08:02
You wrote as an art. You wrote to tell a story as opposed to what the rest of us are doing. We write to fix the
1:08:09
refrigerator. We write to waste time. We write to not tell a story.
1:08:15
If you're going to ask to be paid as a writer, you should understand subjectverb agreement. I think you really should. I think at a baseline,
1:08:20
subjectverb agreement should be a thing you understand. Somebody with 10,000 meaningful hours probably should know
1:08:25
an expert in their field. Ladies and gentlemen, like come on. This is the thing. It's like I'm kind of rooting for her. I feel
1:08:31
bad for this is like literally everybody online keeps saying this. This is literally an author's worst nightmare is like you spend 10 years working on a
1:08:38
book, 12 in her case, and you release it finally, and everybody hates it.
1:08:43
They hate it. And not only do they hate it, but they they say it's unreadable. Like, what a nightmare, dude.
1:08:49

So, I feel I feel for her, but she's also posted all this cocky content that just makes me feel like you need to
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relax. You need to take it down a peg and like really focus on the writing, right? Because you're killing any
1:09:00
goodwill that people might have for she is spending it because the thing is there are probably people in her audience that respect or
1:09:06
understand or align with the boss babe mentality, right? Like the author tube of the world where they're all trying to
1:09:13
promote their own fantasy novel that they're writing. That can only get you so far. You know, it the thing is you
1:09:19
can't be a writer that just sells to other writers all the time. You can't, you know, ultimately it's funny like there are thing there
1:09:24
are terms like a writer's writer, you know, Joan Ddian is considered one of these people. Ursula Kuwin is considered
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one of these people. a writer's writer. It's somebody that like mainstream like didn't have Joan Ddian had a lot of
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mainstream success, but like most of these people are like more popular in their circles
1:09:42
of experts and like they're people who are often cited as sources of inspiration. So in the comedy world,
1:09:50
George Carlin is one of these people. Richard Prior is one of these people. These are not like top comedians so much anymore, but every main comedian is
1:09:57
going to tell you that they were inspired by Richard Prior and George Carlin. every single one of them. Same thing with Nor McDonald. Norm McDonald
1:10:03
was a comedian's comedian. Like average person watching Nor McDonald, like a lot of people would just be like, I don't know, he's kind of off-putting. He's
1:10:08
kind of weird. I don't really know if he's for me. But every comedian thought Nor McDonald was hilarious. So every once in a while, you get people
1:10:14
who are like that. But you, it's tough to make a living off of that. It is. It absolutely is.
1:10:19
When only five people are looking at you and being like, "Yeah, no, you really get it." You know? Well, and that's the thing. You and I

1:10:26
talk about how much we hate the the fact that part of the artistic world and work that we have to participate in is marketing.
1:10:33
But part of being part of being a good artist at this point and at every point in history is being able to sell
1:10:39
yourself. Yeah. Being able to sell yourself and sell your work. It's the best thing you can do. My friend who went to Berkeley uh school
1:10:45
of music in Boston talked about how some of the greatest musicians technically
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that he ever met were 19 years old and went to Berkeley. Mhm. And they have found no success in the
1:10:57
music world. Yeah. Because what makes a great musician technically to another really good
1:11:02
musician does not mean it's marketable to a wider audience that will pay them money and support their life.
1:11:08
No. Art is not a meritocracy. I think it's important to note that here because I know we're talking about a book that is like getting panned and like is
1:11:15
objectively not ready to be in the market right now, but this is not like but the publishing
1:11:20
world is not a meritocracy. best books in the world are not just the ones that are getting published, right? There are lots of really beautiful writing.
1:11:27
There's lots of beautiful writing in the world that is never going to see the light of day that you're never going
1:11:32
to get your hands on because traditional publishing is generally for rich people. Like every other artistic outlet, if
1:11:39
you're wealthy, you stand a much better chance of getting your work in the in the faces of strangers. That's true across all things. It's like
1:11:45
I've read blog posts that were more beautifully written than books I paid for
1:11:50
with binding with binding that went through a How many How many on Broadway shows have you
1:11:55
seen that pale in comparison to some off Broadway shows you've seen? My friends and this I'm totally biased
1:12:02

here 100%. But my friends have written better movies and better television than anything that is getting produced right
1:12:08
now. Correct. We just watched the pilot episode of Narcos. Not to throw Narcos under the bus, but like that is a show
1:12:14
that has been lauded. Everybody is telling me, "You got to watch Narcos. It's so interesting. It's so awesome. You got to watch it. Three seasons just
1:12:22
spaghetti and meatballs the whole time." And we watched the pilot.
1:12:27
My entire class wrote a better pilot our first semester at USC than Narcos.
1:12:32
Yeah. Which I didn't mind it. I can see why it's commercially successful. It was fine. It was fine. But it did include a Huh. I
1:12:40
bet you're wondering how I got here. Kind of narrator the entire time, which is like kind of hacky.
1:12:46
It's hacky in a cheat code. You can't tell us a story visually. You're in a visual medium. That's a little concerning,
1:12:52
right? But yeah, there's a lot of information, too much information that they're trying to fit into the first episode. And so
1:12:57
they're like, well, we're just going to have a guy narrate it the whole time. And literally the whole tone is like, but you're wondering how I got here.
1:13:04
Well, Colombia was kind of a weird place in the 80s and I was a DEI agent and I
1:13:09
got I'm like this is so 90s guy with a cap on wrote it and just
1:13:17
showed up and somehow like somebody had an uncle like there's no other explanation for
1:13:22
how this thing got made. I'm going to make people upset again. Is that okay? Yes. Um I want to talk about Titanic because I think it's a good
1:13:29
and the last time I talked about Titanic it made some people very upset. Connor got very rad through the coals by a
1:13:35
couple of angry commenters because I said Titanic is a very average movie for an average audience.
1:13:40
And people took that as a personal insult to the quality of Titanic. Yeah. I think they thought you meant if

1:13:46
you like Titanic, you're an average person. No. Which is not what you meant. It means like middle America. Yeah.
1:13:52
That's always what big studios want. I'm gonna I'm gonna put up a graph. It's going to be a bell curve. A bell curve
1:13:58
looks like this, right? It's a bell curve. And in the middle of that bell curve is the average.
1:14:04
Yeah. It's the sea of the greatest. It's the most people. It's the most people possible.
1:14:09
Titanic like Titanic appeals to the widest range of
1:14:14
audience. Yeah. Possible. And that's why James Cameron won the Oscar and has all that money and that makes it an average movie. And
1:14:23
I would say the average thing is more likely to be commercially successful
1:14:28
than the above average thing. Look at every Dwayne the Rock Johnson movie. Yes. Is that man an amazing actor? Is that
1:14:35
man amazing at anything? No. But for some reason he fills movie
1:14:41
theaters and so people show up. It's because they recognize him and he's entertaining to watch on screen. I guess
1:14:46
I can't I can't stand that. I can't stand him either. But yes, to to go on record, Titanic is a very average
1:14:54
appealing movie. It was historic for the time it came out. The scale of the movie itself, it made a billion dollars in the
1:15:00
box office. It's a romance movie about [__] a boat going down. I don't know when we got into the business of like defending billionaires,
1:15:07
like super rich, powerful people. We're punching up, guys. Like, we're not punching down. It's not like Jim Cameron
1:15:13
is just like a film intern at [__] SK Global Entertainment just trying to cut his teeth. like, oh, I really just have
1:15:18
a dream. He won. It worked out for him. I don't understand these people. Like, when you
1:15:23
criticize people like Taylor Swift or Jeff Bezos or Jim Cameron, everybody's like, well, that's just ridiculous. I

1:15:29
How could you speak to them like that? I'm like, they're okay, right? They have their houses in Altadena. They
1:15:34
burnt down. I don't think they know. Yeah, because they have another house in the Pacific Palisades. I think everything
1:15:40
worked out for them. Taylor Swift is okay. If you don't like her new album, she will actually survive,
1:15:45
right? It's amazing how well she will survive. I don't know when we got into the business of like defending super
1:15:51
wealthy powerful people, but like you got to stop. They don't need it. Can you defend defend somebody else today?
1:15:56
Defend your local artist today. God. Unless they're Audrey Winter. Audrey Winter has since halted the sale
story updates.
1:16:02
of the original prints and has stated that a new revised version is currently in the works. Okay. So,
1:16:09
remember that she said she was going to create a hard cover and with sprayed edges and that was going to come out in December. She's
1:16:15
going to release that December of this year. Yeah, she posted that on August 4th. Jesus. On August 11th, she posted saying,
1:16:22
"Actually, we're going to push that back to March because my creative team and I need a little bit more time." Yeah. No kidding.
1:16:27
And according to her, this is how she is going to revise the book. This is going to be her revision process.
1:16:33
Tell me all about it. Step number one, a creative team meeting. Her creative team is a team of
1:16:38
six to eight people. Again, we're not getting specific numbers. How many people are you meeting with? Is it six? Is it eight? Is it four?
1:16:43
Oh man. Why are we saying six to eight? Okay, she's going to have a creative team meeting and they're going to go through some bullet points, like big things that
1:16:50
need to happen. Step number two, she's going to get on a call with an artist on her payroll and she's verbally going to

1:16:57
describe what happens chapter by chapter and the artist is going to guide her with some developmental suggestions and
1:17:04
draw concept art for every chapter. This will be one of her uh 15 to 20
1:17:09
artists that she works with. I guess Audrey will then write based on that concept art.
1:17:15
Excuse me. Yeah. She's going to readjust the book based on the concept art. Yeah. Oh man.
1:17:21
She's going to verbally describe the chapters to an artist. They're going to draw some concept art and then she's
1:17:26
going to write the chapters based on that concept art. Step number three is she rewrites. Step number three is she
1:17:34
actually just rewrites the book. Step number four, she's going to have another creative check-in team.
1:17:40
Okay. Uh, step number five, she's going to have a copyline editor passed. She has
1:17:46
voted to hire outside of her audience. I think that was a big note that she got was like, "Don't pull from your audience. Bring in a professional." So,
1:17:52
I think she is going to do that, which is something. Number six, she's going to do some formatting. She's working with the same formatting guy from before. The book was
1:17:58
formatted fine. Like, there was nothing wrong with as far as I know, but the formatting. And then number seven, she's going to do some more proof reading by a
1:18:04
new reader totally outside of the team. And then she's gonna have the creative team look at all over again. And in the meantime, she's going to be posting
1:18:10
chapters on Patreon. Oh, interesting. To try to earn back some trust from the audience. But it's important to note
1:18:16
that some of these posts on Patreon, um, they're kind of putting the heat on the
1:18:22
editors that she worked with before, kind of suggesting that the editors themselves are to blame.
1:18:28
There's something I want to say. No, she's not blaming her editors. Just a little bit. Just Just Yeah, a
1:18:33

little bit. She is. She's suggesting that they didn't give her enough notes. And here's my problem with that. We've talked about that timeline. She was
1:18:39
looking to hire somebody in February and she wanted to release the book in May. She only pushed it back to June.
1:18:45
That's not enough time. That's what, four months? Yeah. Number two, you're self-publishing, which means you don't have to deal with like a publishing
1:18:50
house saying, "We're going to edit this book. Like, you already signed this paperwork, yada yada yada." You have full creative control as a
1:18:56
self-published author. So, when an editor gives you suggested notes, you don't have to take it. The editor is technically working for
1:19:02
you. Yeah. Yeah. So they can go through and like line by line tell you this doesn't work, this doesn't make sense. Red pen, red pen,
1:19:08
red pen. But you don't have to do anything about it because you're the writer. And truthfully, any editor you would pay
1:19:14
to edit your book would not allow a book to go off the shelf if they had the control that was said to be almost
1:19:22
unreadable by audiences. No professional working editor would put their name on something like that if
1:19:29
they had a choice. No. So like I think these were newer editors. I think like some some maybe
1:19:35
early career. I don't know how she found these editors and I actually don't know anything about them or their previous body of work. They could be like very
1:19:41
storied and very well experienced but the book was not well edited.
1:19:47
No, it's clear. Um, and also she is getting a little bit of heat on Patreon because some of the uh chapters like
1:19:54
they are according to other people I haven't read these new Patreon chapters but according to the audience like there
1:20:00
is a marked difference in the quality like it is getting better but it's still not great and they're like you really
1:20:06
should not keep pushing this timeline cuz she's saying that she's editing one chapter a week but even on that timeline with 39

1:20:13
chapters one chapter a week you're going to be late for that March deadline. You got to push that back. Give yourself a year. I don't know what to get out.
1:20:23
Tik Tok as long as she actively no
1:20:28
book. It's just like the timeline has been pushed. She doesn't have to give the money back. And again, I think that money has already been spent creating
1:20:35
this like creative studio that she seems very emotionally attached to that hires between seven and 45 people.
1:20:40
Who knows? Yeah, that's crazy. Yeah. And they posted on Patre. So, she's still getting some negative
1:20:46
feedback on Patreon from the chapters. Uh, and she has stated and her team has
1:20:52
stated that they're not welcoming any more feedback from the audience. It's too stressful and it's having a negative
1:20:59
impact on Audra's mental state. Is that right? And I'm like,
1:21:04
why are you releasing a book? The whole point of releasing these chapters for free on Patreon is to
1:21:09
regain trust from the audience. Right. And now you're saying that the audience feedback is not welcome.
1:21:14
You know what gains audience trust really easily? Uh telling them that they're wrong. Just being like, "You guys are hurting my feelings. Don't do that anymore."
1:21:22
Crazy. Yeah. Crazy. And that's the last update. She hasn't posted on TikTok in a minute.
1:21:28
I can't imagine somebody doing that to people, to an audience that you're trying to sell books to. Like, it's
1:21:35
actually fairly common to write a book and then release it chapter by chapter behind a payw wall. That's not a super
1:21:40
uncommon thing. Or at least to release excerpts of a book before you release it, especially a debut. Like people want to check and see
1:21:48
like what is the writing style because even if the writing is objectively good, there are plenty of like synopsies that
1:21:54

I've read where I'm just like this style is not really my thing. I haven't read a lot of James Joyce just because I'm I don't love that style.
1:22:01
It's really too hard for me to connect with. I I'm much more into Odessa Moshbagg not be the most basic writer in
1:22:08
the world but I really prefer that writing style. Yeah. Um but so it's extremely unusual to not
1:22:14
release any excerpts of your book. It is. Um so what's the lesson here? Do
why are authors so defensive?.
1:22:19
you think I think the thing that I'm left with is um
1:22:24
I looked up authors receiving negative reviews because I know that this I know RF Kuang
1:22:31
got into some hot water after the release of Yellowface because she's like pretty chronically online and like was very aware when like negative reviews
1:22:38
were pouring in and people were like I don't know about this book. Her last book uh Catabas that just came out also has been getting some heat.
1:22:44
Yes. And she can be very defensive. She can. Um, and it's funny because she gets like profiles in The New Yorker and
1:22:51
like is a full-time writer and like has made her living doing this. So, it's very odd seeing like Audrey Winter and
1:22:57
RF Kuang totally different styles, totally different like worlds and people
1:23:03
and they react the same way to negative criticism. And I think that's a real problem in the writer space and in
1:23:11
publishing. I was looking up this writer I was just looking up writer reacting to
1:23:16
bad review. and this girl popped up. The video only had like 500 views. She was
1:23:21
in college at the time and she published a romance novel and she sent a free copy to uh the school newspapers editor
1:23:29
to review and then published in the school paper to try to get some press and the editor read it and released a review and the review was very critical
1:23:36
of the book. It wasn't cruel by any stretch. I read it. It was but it was very critical. It was like this
1:23:42

everything is too convenient. It's a fantasy novel. It's a romance novel. There's a a romantic triangle and uh
1:23:49
there's just nothing new or fresh to be said in here. Like this is very much like a debut writer who's still finding
1:23:55
her footing. Yeah. And she read the review for the video and was kind of making comments along it. And at first I was like this is
1:24:02
really interesting hearing a writer read their negative review out loud and like react to it. Like that's a really painful thing to do, but I think it's
1:24:08
important and the reason that you sent it to the editor of your school newspaper, right? But she's also making comments that
1:24:15
drove me crazy. I was like, "It's not hitting you. You're not absorbing the information. This is good information
1:24:21
for you to have and it's not getting into your bones because you're too busy defending yourself."
1:24:26
Yeah. At some point, the editor said, "Uh, this is supposed to be a book about a
1:24:34
strong female character, and there's nothing strong about this female
1:24:39
character. M she's too tropy and she's too caught up in the actions of like the men around her to really stand out and be an
1:24:45
independent character at all. And the writer looks at the camera and says something like, "Oh, I understand that
1:24:53
you want a strong female character, but like it is a romance." And I think that
1:24:58
sentiment is a [__] problem. Yeah. Strong female character does not
1:25:05
mean biceps shooting a gun with one hand and having an abortion with the other
1:25:11
one. That is not what that means. It means moral complexity. It means like being good and bad. It means making good
1:25:18
decisions and bad decisions. It means being smart but also being kind of stupid. You know the way that like male
1:25:23
characters are usually written. Oppenheimer is a great male character. What a complex interesting character.

1:25:29
His wife is an alcoholic. That's the only adjective that she gets
1:25:36
that whole movie. She's drunk that movie. Yeah. Oppenheimer gets 55 adjectives.
1:25:42
One adjective for that character. It's not a complex female character. And it's the same thing here. Just because a
1:25:47
woman is in a romantic relationship, that means that she's not strong. Hit me right now.
1:25:54
Let's test this theory. Like what? You're selling yourself out as a writer by saying that. like you're showing who
1:26:00
you are by saying something that twisted. You are. And I think what ultimately is very disappointing as an artist looking
1:26:07
at other artists is like the enemy of growth is perfection,
1:26:14
right? and writers like that, like uh
1:26:20
this woman that we've been talking about for the last hour, Audra,
1:26:25
the the problem that they're facing, it's not that that just that they can't take criticism.
1:26:32
It's that they view their work as perfect. And when something is perfect,
1:26:38
it can't grow. It can't become better. I don't think that's so much the problem. Mhm.
1:26:43
Maybe in Audrey's case there is part of that where she's like, "It can't be any better. I've spent 12 years on this thing and like I know this world better
1:26:49
than anybody. It is as good as it can possibly be." But I think it's more the work is an extension of themselves. And so when
1:26:56
you're critiquing the work, they take it as a personal affront. And that's not the way that
1:27:01
you should hold your writing. I don't think No, I don't think you should hold your writing as like, well, if you're critiquing my writing, then you're
1:27:06
critiquing me as a human being. Those two things have to be in separate rooms. They do. And I think it's tough because
1:27:12
with writing, you draw a lot of personal things into the into the words that you put on the page. So, it's understandable
1:27:19

that that's a hard separation to make for most people. Yeah. She Audra Winter said in one of her videos early on, she was like, "I'm
1:27:25
sitting at my desk right now. This is where I write. In the other room is my office. That's where like I have 3,000
1:27:31
like printed books that I printed myself and signed myself and packaged myself
1:27:36
sitting in boxes waiting to ship out. This is like the first thing I think about when I wake up at night and the last thing I think about when I go to
1:27:42
sleep. And I I care about this so much. Yeah. And of course you do,
1:27:48
but I think sometimes people get more caught up in the aesthetics of being a
1:27:54
writer or being a successful writer. They like the feeling of wearing big glasses and
1:27:59
sitting in a chair in in a lecture room talking about the amazing world that they created. Everybody wants to be
1:28:04
Suzanne Collins at the end when Hunger Games is already like a multi-million dollar movie franchise and she's
1:28:11
standing on a stage with Jennifer Lawrence saying like, "All of my dreams have come true. This is amazing." But nobody wants to be Suzanne Collins who's
1:28:16
just sitting at her desk at night being like, "I don't know what I'm doing, right? This doesn't make any sense. I'm on draft three and I hate this story.
1:28:23
I'm so sick of it." I I I think we can say for sure the person that cares the most about Audrey
1:28:30
Winter's book is Audrey Winter. Absolutely. You know, and to say that she doesn't
1:28:36
care, I think, would be bad faith. She cares a lot. She cares a lot. Like you said, she
1:28:41
wakes up every day and it's on her mind. Yeah. Right. But as an artist, I think she is. It
1:28:48
sounds like she's hamstringing herself. She is. You know, in a way that's tough to watch. Yeah. Wow. And if she keeps posting the
1:28:54
way that she's posting, just like pushing off blame to other people, not accepting criticism, like shutting off
1:28:59
audience comments and like feedback, this is not going to get better. No, you won't grow. You're not going to be able to salvage

1:29:04
it. Even if you don't think you're perfect, if you remove all of the avenues for people to tell you, hey, you're not
1:29:10
perfect yet, then functionally you have the same thing as perfection, which means you're not growing. You're missing
1:29:16
opportunities for growth. Yeah. And once you stop growing as an artist, you die. I don't think even as a person
1:29:21
you should never be like, "Well, I'm done." Yeah. Exactly. I'm done growing and changing. Exactly. And again, it goes back to what we were talking about earlier of the
1:29:26
10,000 hours. Yeah. I hit 10,000 hours. We're there. I don't need to grow anymore. I just think you should be more curious.
1:29:32
You should. Absolutely. I would hope. I think that's the message. Stay curious. Like be a lot more curious both
1:29:37
about your artistic pursuits and the way you want to grow as a person, you know?
1:29:43
Oh man, this is a big subject. It was. We talked a lot about that. We did. We talked a very long time.
1:29:48
Thank you so much for bringing me down this little rabbit hole of internet drama that I have not heard a single
1:29:54
thing about. I'm so happy. We have very different algorithms, Conor and I. It's comical.
1:30:00
I am Lindsay and I'm Connor and this has been Girlfriend Explains complex pop culture thing to me.
1:30:05
Yes. And my girlfriend did explain that. Thank you so much for explaining it to me. Um I don't know if I feel wiser or
1:30:12
more informed, but I feel something good. I promised not to handr write anymore because this this was really
1:30:17
tough. I just thought I would try something different. It was nice. I was like doing some research and just writing in my notebook and I'm like,
1:30:23
"Oh, this this feels good. I like this much more than typing, you know, and like just shifting from tab to tab."
1:30:28

But, uh, I get it. It didn't really work. Yeah, we'll do printing from now on. That's fine. Yeah, it's okay.
1:30:34
Um, if you like content like this, uh, subscribe, follow, like, comment, whatever the things you're supposed to do are. We are here for you every week
1:30:40
and we're not very good at marketing. So, this is our way of doing it very awkwardly at the end of our videos. Please.
1:30:46
Um, but yeah, that's Lindsay. I'm Connor and we'll see you next week. And I'll see you in two seconds.

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